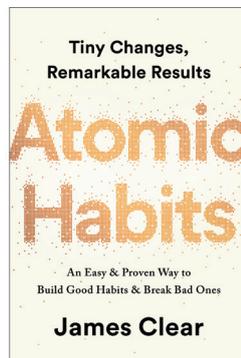


ATOMIC HABITS
BY JAMES CLEAR



THE BOOK



Atomic Habits

by James Clear



INTRODUCTION

Your habits define your life.

Whether they are good, bad or indifferent, habits are part of everyday life. Taking control of them means taking control of your life. With his book *Atomic Habits*, World Habit Expert James Clear teaches you how to amplify or create good habits and knock down the bad ones.

Atoms are the smallest units of matter. They are the building blocks of everything. Like atoms, atomic habits are the building block of your major habits. Change the atoms and the whole structure changes. Change your atomic habits and your life changes. With *Atomic Habits*, James Clear teaches you to start your habit changing journey with the tiniest changes to your routine and thinking.

Once your habits are working for you, you will be amazed at the strides you take in your life. Filled with anecdotes and charm, *Atomic Habits* is an easy read that will change the way you look at life.



5 BEST QUOTES

“Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become. No single instance will transform your beliefs, but as the votes build up, so does the evidence of your new identity.”

“You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.”

“You should be far more concerned with your current trajectory than with your current results.”

“When you fall in love with the process rather than the product, you don’t have to wait to give yourself permission to be happy. You can be satisfied anytime your system is running.”

“Goals are good for setting a direction, but systems are best for making progress.”



10 BIG IDEAS

1. TINY CHANGES

James Clear calls his book *Atomic Habits* because he wants you to start small. Atoms are tiny particles that are the building blocks of everything that exists. Put many tiny atoms together, and they make a big difference. Put many tiny habits together in the same fashion, and they make a big difference.

Clear describes the British cycling team. For many years this team languished at the bottom of every ladder. In 2003, new director Dave Brailsford implemented dozens of tiny changes. From new fabrics to different massage gels and handwashing procedures, the team started to do things differently. No single change would have made much difference, but all the changes put together made the British team a force in the cycling world.

2. MAKE IT OBVIOUS

The first law of habit-forming is to make it obvious. One of the best ways to make your new habit obvious is to use habit stacking. Habit stacking is simple and highly effective. All it takes is to add a new habit to an already ingrained one.

Think of something that you always do and add a new action directly afterwards:

- After I pour my morning coffee, I will meditate for one minute
- After I take off my work clothes, I will change into my workout clothes
- After I sit down for dinner, I will say one thing I'm grateful for

The trick is to start small. Notice that it is “change into workout clothes”, not “workout”. It is one small habit that leads to the next. Stacking is the best way to begin forming new habits.

3. MAKE IT INVISIBLE

For every law of habit-forming, there is an inverse law. Naturally, as well as forming valuable new habits, you will want to eradicate bad ones. The inverse of making it obvious is making it invisible.

Self-control is difficult. Making it invisible means cutting your habit off at the source. If your system puts habits in clear view, you are more likely to do them. Clear says that many people who exhibit impressive self-control are actually mostly eliminating temptation.



10 BIG IDEAS

With this in mind:

- Put your phone in another room
- Delete social media apps
- Move the television out of the bedroom

All these tiny changes remove the trigger that has you submitting to your bad habit. You can't check your phone while it is in another room, you can't be upset by social media if you don't have the app, and you can't stay up too late watching TV if it isn't there.

4. MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE

The second law is to make your new habit attractive. People are drawn to what makes them feel good. Clear explains how dopamine is a significant driver for all people.

Dopamine is a chemical released in the brain that makes you feel good. Interestingly, research shows your dopamine 'hit' comes more from the anticipation of a reward than from the reward itself. Think how exciting it is when you order something online compared to when you receive it. That need for anticipatory dopamine drives everyone.

The trick to making your new habit attractive is temptation bundling. If you have a new habit, you are trying to form, consider adding a reward afterwards. "After my new habit, I will do something I enjoy". Make it specific to each habit but make sure it doesn't undo your work. "After a run, I will watch the show I enjoy" is good. "After I run, I will eat a bowl of ice cream" is counterproductive.

5. MAKE IT UNATTRACTIVE

The inverse is, of course, to make your habit unattractive. Smoking is a compelling example of making it unattractive. If you spend enough time thinking of all the adverse effects of smoking, it will soon become unattractive.

Of course, smoking is also highly addictive, and people will often push the long term effects aside and focus on the immediate rewards of smoking. All this means is that making it unattractive can be challenging.

It can take some time to reframe your thinking. One way to help is to find substitutes and dig into why you continue your habit. If you smoke to relax, try meditating. If you smoke socially, think about the fact that you can still socialise without a cigarette.

Reframe and replace.



10 BIG IDEAS

6. MAKE IT EASY

The third law, making it easy, is about repetition and persistence. No matter what, keep practising your atomic habit. The more often you repeat your habit, the easier it becomes. Going to the gym once is easy; twice is more challenging. The 40th time is easy because it has become a habit.

By the same token, if you create an environment where continuing your habit is easy, you will have better chances of making it work.

- Want to read more at night? Put a book by the bed
- Want to exercise more? Lay out your gym clothes, so they are ready when you need them
- Want to improve your diet? Pre-prepare fruits and vegetables

Whatever makes your habit easier to keep doing is a bonus.

7. MAKE IT 'DIFFICULT'

Making it difficult is not about making habits hard to do; instead, it is about making them hard not to do. You might schedule a yoga session ahead of time, prepare that healthy meal, whatever means you feel almost obliged to continue your habit when the time comes.

It is also clever to find ways to automate your habits. The most obvious example is automated payments. If you have a bad habit of paying your bills late, you can change it to a good habit with a simple direct debit. Then, not only is it a good habit, you barely even have to think about it.

8. MAKE IT SATISFYING

Clear says, "What is immediately rewarded is repeated. What is immediately punished is avoided." That is why the fourth rule is to make things satisfying. The more satisfying your habit is, the more likely you will continue doing it. The best news is that progress is a reward in itself. Knowing that you successfully ingrained a new healthy habit and kept it going for the long term feels great.

A bad session at the gym can be the most rewarding because you know you did it even though you felt off colour. That's why you should keep going as long as you possibly can. Even if you just go to the gym for five minutes, make sure you go. Missing for a day can hurt. Missing for a few days can destroy.



10 BIG IDEAS

9. MAKE IT UNSATISFYING

If it is unsatisfying, you are far less likely to continue your bad habit. Why would you continue to do something that punishes you? And why would you stop your good habit if you received immediate negative consequences?

One of the best ways to make sure a bad habit is ultimately unsatisfying is to have an accountability buddy. You can implement minor punishments between you or just rely on each other to keep going. Either way, letting down your buddy will be so unsatisfying that you will be unlikely to continue the bad habit or fail in the good one.

10. CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

Along with the four laws, the key to successful habit-forming is to change your mindset. You must realise that talent is a myth. Success comes from hard work and good habits. It also comes from the right mindset. If you want to be a runner, you should think of yourself as a runner and act as a runner would act. If you identify in a certain way, your behaviour will mirror that identity.

You should also take pride in what you do. The more pride you have in your habits, the more likely you will keep them up. Someone who is proud of their car will clean it often. Someone who is proud of their looks will work hard to maintain them. If you are proud of your habits, you will pursue them with vigour.

**3 ACTION STEPS****1. LINK YOUR HABITS**

If you want to create a new habit, you need to link it to an existing one. Every time you walk in the door, put your keys in the basket. When you finish cleaning your teeth, do a pushup.

By linking a new habit to one you already consistently do, it will soon become ingrained.

2. APPLY THE FOUR LAWS

- Make it obvious.
- Make it attractive.
- Make it easy.
- Make it satisfying.

Apply these four laws to any new habit you want to form.

For habits that you want to break, apply the inverse. Make it invisible, make it unattractive, make it difficult, and make it unpleasant.

3. CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

Along with your habits, change your attitude. If you want to run, think of yourself as someone who runs. If you want to write, think of yourself as a writer.

In the same way, take pride in what you do. The more pride you have in your habits, the more effort you will put in.

**1 KEY TAKEAWAY**

The key takeaway of Atomic Habits is that you can change your habits by reworking your systems. By following the four laws and correcting your mindset, you can take control.

You are not your habits. You control them, and you can make them work for you.

Follow the four laws, and you can change your life. Minimising your negative habits and maximising your positive ones will make all the difference.



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